

I claim:

1. An out-sourced merchandise-return system providing a general store enterprise of the type having distributed store locations with a service to attract the public into any of the store locations who while visiting a given location to utilize the service might also utilize the visit to shop for and purchase unrelated goods at the given store location, the system comprising:

a plurality of remote merchandisers;

a distributed purchasing public of any of the remote merchandisers' merchandise;

a general store enterprise having distributed store locations at which the general store enterprise offers an out-sourced merchandise return service on behalf of the remote merchandisers as well as offers related packing, shipping and/or mailing supplies which are related by virtue of relating to effecting a merchandise return;

wherein said general store enterprise implements said out-sourced merchandise return service in part by provision of merchandise-return information storage means for storing merchandise-return information applicable to merchandise of the merchandisers; and

wherein the distributed store locations are linked to the merchandise-return information storage means by a communications medium and handle physical processing of returns of purchased merchandise submitted to a given store location if clearance is obtained after contacting the merchandise-return information storage means;

whereby said out-sourced merchandise-return system affords the general store enterprise opportunities to attract the distributed purchasing public of the remote merchandisers into its store locations so such public while visiting a given location to utilize the service might also utilize the visit to shop for and purchase unrelated goods at the given store location.

2. The merchandise return system of claim 1 wherein:

the merchandise-return information stored on the storage means includes information on original sales transactions by which a given merchandiser fulfilled or caused fulfillment of orders of merchandise.

3. The merchandise return system of claim 2 further comprising:

merchandise identifiers attached to returnable units of merchandise during or before order fulfillment wherein the identifiers facilitate research of information in the merchandise-return information storage means.

4. The merchandise return system of claim 1 wherein the plurality of remote merchandisers deal in a wide variety of differing goods and the general store enterprise offers goods arguably competitive with the goods of the merchandisers.

5. The merchandise return system of claim 4 wherein the general store enterprise comprises one of WAL-MART® or another like major store enterprise.

6. The merchandise return system of claim 1 wherein the merchandise-return information storage means in part includes access to portions of at least one storage means controlled by at least one of the plurality of remote merchants.



14. The merchandise return system of claim 1 wherein the plurality of remote merchandisers comprise assorted online boutique.